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WTO TBT COMMITTEE APPROVES TRIENNIAL REVIEW; LABELLING DEBATES CONTINUE

On 10 November the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) convened to adopt, *inter alia*, the Committee's Second Triennial Review (TR). A triennial review of the TBT -- the first of which was adopted on 19 November 1997 -- is mandated under Article 15.2 of the TBT Agreement, and is meant both to summarise the work of the TBT undertaken in the preceding three year period and to lay out a plan of action for the coming three years.

Of note is an annex to the TR that outlines some initial steps the Committee will take to address the needs of developing countries specific to the implementation of the TBT agreement. In particular, the Committee will call on those organisations with TBT observer status -- the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation for example -- to provide recommendations on technical assistance and to aid developing countries in assessing and prioritising their TBT implementation needs. Although not a binding text, several members, both developing and developed, were quite optimistic about the TR annex.

Also with respect to the Triennial Review, Members have agreed on a set of core principles that will guide future committee procedures on international standard setting, notably consensus, coherence, impartiality and openness. It is worth noting that these principles will not alter the TBT Agreement itself.

The TBT Second Triennial Review is an unrestricted document and is currently available on the WTO website document dissemination facility (<http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html>) under the symbol G/TBT/9.

Labelling Schemes a Hot Topic

Despite the general optimism around the Second Triennial Review, some contentious issues were discussed, principally on the topic of product labelling. Much of this discussion focused on a proposal tabled by the EU to include in the TR, under a separate heading, a structured workplan on the topic of labelling which would focus on four specific areas: a preliminary exchange of views on country experiences with labelling; a stock-taking of relevant labelling work ongoing in other international fora; technical assistance and labelling; and an examination of the impacts of labelling on developing countries and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In the proposal, the EU was careful to exclude any specific references to either eco-labelling or process and production methods (PPMs), fearing that Members would be opposed to such a plan. However, the ability to isolate the contentious issue of PPMs from labelling issues in general was not convincing to some Members and the proposal was not included.

The discussion of whether or not to include the EU proposal in the TR spilled over into a more general debate on the inclusion of labelling language in the TR that met with mixed reactions from Members. While some developing countries were sceptical of pursuing more detailed work on labelling, Brazil took the position that labelling language should be included in the TR since excluding it would do little for the credibility of the TBT, especially among the international environmental community. Switzerland and Canada were also interested in having labelling issues included in the TR, though each for very different reasons. The Swiss argued that it was important that the labelling question remain open so that the Committee could continue to discuss more thoroughly the effects of non product-related PPMs on the TBT Agreement per se. The Canadian delegation, on the other hand, proposed that the discussion continue given the proliferation of international labelling schemes -- specifically eco-labelling and GMO labelling -- and their potential use as mechanisms for protection.

Also of note during the meeting was discussion on a recent European Commission notification to the TBT Committee requiring the mandatory labelling of eggs entering the European market. If enacted, the program would require that egg exporters indicate clearly on the product packaging details specifying the conditions under which the eggs were produced, making specific reference to their "process and production methods" (PPMs). Details regarding the EC proposal, however, remain uncertain since the directive is still under development in Brussels.

In the last TBT meeting, Canada enquired about the details of the plan but a response to this remains forthcoming from the EC.

ICTSD Internal Files.

DISPUTE SETTLEMENT: EU CHILE - SWORDFISH; ASBESTOS APPELLATE BODYEU Requests WTO Panel to rule on Swordfish dispute

Upping the ante in the fledgling environmentally-related dispute between the EC and Chile over the latter's ban on foreign ships unloading swordfish catches in Chilean ports, the EC on 7 November formally requested a WTO dispute panel to rule on the case. EC Trade spokesman Anthony Gooch said the EU had lodged its request after consultations with Chile produced no result.

The EU had requested consultations on 19 April over a 1991 Chilean ban on access to its ports to foreign vessels catching swordfish inside and outside its 200-mile exclusive economic zone (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 4 No. 29, 25 July 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.25-07-00.htm>).

Chile says it upholds the ban for conservation purposes, and argues that its measure is "fully consistent with conservation measures established in the WTO and in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea". Chile expressed surprise at the EU request, and has initiated an action before the tribunal of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in response to the European submission. Spanish ships that catch swordfish in international waters off Chile have long sought to 'trans-ship' their catch in Chilean ports -- in other words, offload the fish and reload them onto other ships. In July 1998, a Spanish fishery association complained about the Chilean measures to the EC, which subsequently launched an investigation. The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), a global conservation group, opposes the EC decision to seek a panel. "It shows that the EC is giving priority to narrow economic interests over the need to protect swordfish stocks in the Pacific, which have declined sharply over the last years," said WWF trade policy officer Mikel Insausti.

The EC considers the Chilean measure an impediment to trade, saying that, "Whilst the Commission shares the general aim of conserving swordfish resources in the South Pacific, it considers that any measures to this end must be taken in a way which least distorts trade and must not amount to arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination."

The EC's panel request is its first and will be submitted to the next Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on 17 November; a panel will be set up automatically following a second DSB request, expected in early 2001.

Asbestos Appellate Body seeks non-party submissions

As reported in a *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest Special Update* on 9 November, the WTO Appellate Body in the France-Canada asbestos case (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 4, No. 35, 19 September 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story2.19-09-00.htm>) has for the first time laid out procedures governing non-governmental submissions to a dispute. The procedure, according to Appellate Body chair Florentino Feliciano, "has been adopted by the Division hearing this appeal for the purposes of this appeal only...and is not a new working procedure drawn up by the Appellate Body." Those submitting '*amicus*' briefs to the WTO's court of appeal must do so, however, by noon Geneva time on 16 November.

Submissions must be no longer than three pages, contain the specific issues of law in the panel ruling that the applicant will address in the brief, and an indication of how the brief will contribute

to resolution of the dispute without repeating arguments already made by the parties in the dispute. Thus far, according to trade sources, the Appellate Body has received approximately 10-12 submissions, around five of which were received prior to the release of the *amicus* brief procedure.

Some WTO Members have expressed concern over the unprecedented Appellate Body move, and have indicated that they will raise the issue of the non-party submission procedure at the next DSB on 17 November. The topic of *amicus* briefs from non-governmental parties has remained a contentious one since the so-called Shrimp-Turtle dispute in October 1998, when the Appellate Body reversed the panel's decision that such submissions were not allowed in dispute settlement proceedings. Since then, Members such as Australia, India, Japan, Mexico, and the EC have expressed concern at the growing tendency of WTO panels and the Appellate Body to seek input from parties outside the dispute settlement process.

The Appellate Body decision is expected in early 2001.

"EU seeks WTO dispute panel in Chile swordfish row," REUTERS, 8 November 2000; "EU starts WTO case against Chile over fish policy," REUTERS, 19 April 2000; "Chile emprende acciones ante tribunal del mar in respuesta a UE," EFE, 9 November 2000; "WTO Appellate Body sets out procedures for amicus briefs in asbestos case," WTO REPORTER, 13 November 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

SPS COMMITTEE DISCUSSES EQUIVALENCE PROVISIONS AND TRADE CONCERNS

The WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures met on 8-9 November to discuss new and previously raised trade concerns as well as issues relating to the equivalence provisions in Article 4 of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement).

During informal consultations prior to the meeting, delegates discussed the equivalence provisions of the SPS Agreement (i.e. Article 4 which requires Members to accept differing SPS measures of other Members as equivalent if they provide the appropriate level of protection). The chairman read out a summary of the consultations which he will use to report to the General Council where equivalence has also been raised as an 'implementation' issue. The discussion mainly focused on a US submission (G/SPS/GEN/212; available online) which outlined US experience and suggested that in the past, equivalence negotiations have taken "a great deal of the time...and have not resulted in immediate new trade opportunities," and that the utilisation of other provisions of the SPS Agreement (Articles 5, 7, 8 and Annexes B and C) "may yield more immediate trade benefits". India called on developed countries to notify the WTO of any equivalence agreements they enter into between themselves so that developing countries can study them and negotiate similar agreements with developed countries.

Wood Packaging

Canada -- supported by the US, Korea, Japan and Chile -- expressed concerns regarding an EU proposal for temporary emergency measures on wood packaging (G/SPS/N/EEC/93; available

online) which Canada said would cover 69 percent of all its exports of goods to the EU. The measure, notified to the SPS Committee in July, aims to protect EU forests against the pinewood nematode *Bursaphelenchus xylophilus* by requiring packaging made of coniferous wood originating in Canada, China, Japan and the US to be heat-treated to 56 degrees Celsius for at least 30 minutes and to have a moisture content below 20 percent or to have been pressure treated. Canada has urged the EU to wait with implementing the emergency measure until negotiations on multilateral standards are completed in the International Plant Protection Conventions (IPPC). Other Members also stressed the "enormous impact" and "abrupt timing" of the emergency measure. The EU has agreed to postpone the proposed date of entry into force, originally set for 1 January 2001, but added that it could not wait for the IPPC negotiations to reach an agreement.

The Secretariat presented a Note on "Technical Assistance Typology" (G/SPS/GEN/206; available online) which outlines a possible typology of technical assistance needs to help Members decide which types of technical assistance action is most appropriate. The paper highlights various new areas for technical cooperation, suggesting a shift of focus from assistance at the technical to the political level, and also new ways of technical assistance involving the public, media and private sector. The Note found widespread support among the delegates.

Other trade concerns discussed at the meeting included, *inter alia*, New Zealand's complaint over Indonesia's restrictions on the importation of fresh fruit even though the original infestation in 1996 only lasted for a few weeks; complaints against restrictions by Argentina and India on imports of bovine semen brought by the EU and Canada; Thailand's recurring complaint against the Mexican ban on Thai milled rice; and concerns by the EU over Panama's recent delays in import certification of Danish milk powder which the EU claims amounts to an import ban without justification.

The next SPS Committee Meeting is scheduled for 14-15 March 2001.

WTO Documents are available online at: <http://www.wto.org/wto/ddf/ep/public.html>.

ICTSD Internal Files.

CTD, APEC AND US ENGAGE IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Committee on Trade & Development Re-convenes Over Technical Assistance

At the second half of the 31st session of the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) on 8 November, Members resumed discussions on various items of its work agenda, though a major portion of the session revolved around developing a strategy on technical assistance in the WTO. Members also discussed special and differential treatment; the UN Financing for Development process, and market access measures in favour of Least-Developed Countries.

Despite the extent of discussions on technical assistance (such as assistance in the development of appropriate laws regulatory systems and infrastructures), according to WTO sources no final decisions on either a three-year technical assistance plan or on the draft "Strategy of Technical Assistance" are expected until the 32nd session in February 2001. The CTD work program for 2001 will also be adopted in February.

Discussion also continued on special and differential treatment on the basis of a Secretariat paper updated from 1999. Members agreed that the Chairman should conduct further consultations on the WTO's contribution to the work of the UN preparatory committee on the High Level Event on Financing for Development (FfD). The FfD preparatory committee meets on 16 November to consider all outstanding issue (e.g. the venue, date, and format for the concluding event; see <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/index.html>). The Chair was also asked to provide Members with a written explanation of proposed reporting procedures relating to market access measures in favour of LDCs and to conduct further consultations on this matter if necessary.

APEC and US Forward WTO Technical Assistance Initiatives

Senior officials from the 21-member APEC forum on 10 November discussed approximately 300 training programmes to assist government officials from APEC's developing members speed up the implementation of WTO rules, according to sources. Senior Thai officials state that APEC needs a \$US 13.3 million budget to finance the programs, principally to cover training sessions for governments officials in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The programs are to include sessions on legal structure, domestic infrastructure, human resources training for negotiation skills in the WTO process, and dispute settlement management.

The US Trade Representative (USTR) and the US Agency for International Development announced on 10 November that the US would grant \$US 650,000 to the WTO's Global Trust Fund for Technical Assistance. The grant is to be used to conduct educational workshops on trade policy and WTO rules for countries in Africa, and will also fund the development of computer-based training modules on WTO Agreements. The Trust Fund relies exclusively on voluntary Member contributions and was set up as a response to specific requests from sub-Saharan African Members. The current workshop in Gabon (see WTO In Brief, this issue) represents a further initiative undertaken by the WTO in this area.

"Officials discuss training programs to introduce WTO rules," KYODO NEWS INTERNATIONAL, 10 November 2000; "US provides funds for WTO Africa Training," WASHINGTON TRADE DAILY, 10 November 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

WTO CONVENES ON EXTERNAL TRANSPARENCY

In a first-of-its-kind meeting, WTO Heads of Delegation met on 9 November for an Informal Consultation to discuss how the trade body should address the issue of external transparency. There was general agreement among Members that they would conduct further outreach at their domestic levels on their own terms but that the WTO could do more outreach via seminars and workshops and by improving access to its work through its website (<http://www.wto.org>).

While Canada, the US and the EC pushed for even greater openings in areas such as document de-restriction and the establishment of a mechanism for parliamentary input into the WTO, these met with little general support and with opposition from some developing countries, notably Egypt, Pakistan, and Mexico. Countries opposed to further opening up of the trade body contend that greater external transparency would undermine the "intergovernmental nature" of the organisation. Zimbabwe stated its opinion that the current level of WTO external transparency and outreach is

adequate and that the organisation should not be spending any more time or resources on this area than it already does.

With regard to including external transparency as a formal agenda item for General Council discussion (as opposed to bringing the issue up periodically under 'other business'), there was no conclusion drawn. Some countries are challenging the legal validity of bringing external transparency forward as a formal agenda item, but General Council Chair Kåre Bryn has indicated that he cannot prevent it from reaching the formal discussion should a Member wish for it to be included. Trade sources indicate that there is potential for the next step to be the convening of an Informal General Council session on the matter, though Members remain divided on this.

ICTSD Internal Files.

CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY IN THE HAGUE

Delegates from around 160 countries have begun negotiations at the Sixth Conference of the Parties (COP 6) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) in The Hague (13-24 November 2000). Discussions will focus on setting operational details for commitments on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as set out in the December 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Numerous issues still remain to be resolved after the failure to achieve consensus at the intergovernmental meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies for Implementation in June and September this year (see *BRIDGES Weekly Trade News Digest*, Vol. 4, No. 24, 20 June 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story4.20-06-00.htm>; and Vol. 4, No. 35, 19 September 2000, <http://www.ictsd.org/html/weekly/story1.19-09-00.htm>).

At this juncture, the US -- backed by 14 Latin American countries -- favours the unrestricted use of 'flexibility mechanisms' to meet GHG target, such as emissions trading, Joint Implementation and the Clean Development Mechanism, while the EU believes there should be limits to the use of these mechanisms to ensure that genuine emissions cuts are made. Other contentious issues to be discussed include the use of "carbon sinks" (e.g. forests) to meet emissions targets; details of the Kyoto mechanisms, in particular accounting rules for allocating credits, roles and responsibilities of various institutions; a compliance regime that provides for both facilitation and enforcement; and strengthening developing countries' capacity to combat climate change and deal with its adverse effects.

BRIDGES will report on the outcome of COP 6 in a forthcoming issue. See also the current and forthcoming issues of ICTSD's monthly *BRIDGES Between Trade and Sustainable Development* for further reporting and analysis (http://www.ictsd.org/html/arct_sd.htm#Bridges). A daily coverage of the Conference can be obtained from IISD's Earth Negotiations Bulletin at: <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop6/>.

"Sixth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change," EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN, 13 November.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS: AFRICAFirst field trials of GM crops to begin in Kenya

Genetically modified sweet potato seedlings developed by the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute -- with the support of Monsanto life sciences company, private foundations and the US government -- are about to enter their first field trials in Kenya. The plants have been bio-engineered to resist the feathery mottle virus, an aphid-borne disease that can destroy up to 80 percent of a given crop. A study suggests that the GM harvest could be worth \$500 million a year to the African economy. Success on sweet potatoes could lead to similar experiences with other tropical crops and increase trade in other GM products. Suspecting a hidden agenda by Monsanto, consumer groups are warning that there has not been enough debate over potential side-effects, such as the spread of pesticide-resistance in insects, antibiotic resistance in humans or loss of indigenous agricultural products. Said Samuel Ochieng from the Kenya Consumer Information Network, "We are not saying there are no benefits -- the issue is that we are being rushed, and there is not enough consultation." Monsanto says it has transferred the technology for free and argues that the concerns prevalent in Europe around GM foods do not reflect Africa's dire needs.

Study finds FDI in Africa to be largely influenced by economic returns and political stability

According to a study published by BusinessMap, a Johannesburg consultancy, foreign investors are more concerned with rich mineral resources and political stability than with sound economic policies or good infrastructure. Based on more than 400 interviews, the study concluded that, "investment does not necessarily follow governments' pursuance of orthodox macroeconomic policies". South Africa, Botswana and Mauritius, for instance, receive relatively little foreign direct investment (FDI) despite pursuing prudent economic policies, while Angola, Tanzania and Mozambique enjoy large inflows of foreign capital in spite of the poor state of their financial, transport and communications infrastructure. Elsewhere in the region, political risk was found to be the most important consideration for foreign investors, outweighing incentives such as tax breaks and export processing zones. Other factors influencing FDI include the shortage of skills; the AIDs epidemic; and hidden transaction costs resulting from bureaucracy, corruption and demands on foreign investors to "empower" local people.

Other News

***Ethiopia and Kenya have signed an agreement aimed at promoting bilateral co-operation and dealing jointly with occurrences of security problems along their common border. The agreement commits the two countries to fostering an atmosphere conducive to the smooth flow of trade and unhindered movement of people along their border.

***Tanzania will introduce the Agreement of Customs Valuation (ACV) on 1 January 2001, a simplified imports customs valuation system developed by the WTO, thereby replacing the Brussels Definition of Value (BDV). Tanzania's neighbours Kenya and Uganda had already put into place the ACV last year, pressing Tanzania to adopt the system to support the establishment of a common market in East Africa.

***Zimbabwe's Industry and Commerce Minister, Nathan Shamuyarira, has warned that African States could be overwhelmed by globalisation unless their economies were integrated. He urged African states to join protests against the negative policies of the WTO and to co-operate with Africans in the Diaspora to promote Pan-Africanism. "The WTO is an instrument for the West to replace colonialism with marginalisation of developing countries," he said.

"Africa's biotech food debut," FINANCIAL TIMES, 3 November 2000; "Sound policies are failing to lure investors," FINANCIAL TIMES, 7 November 2000; "Ethiopia and Kenya Sign Agreements," XINHUA NEWS AGENCY, 4 November 2000; "Tanzania to Introduce WTO Customs Valuation System," XINHUA NEWS AGENCY, 4 November 2000; "Africans Urged to Reject WTO Policies," PANAFRICAN NEWS AGENCY, 4 November 2000.

EU TO CREATE OWN FOOD AGENCY

The European Commission adopted a proposal on 8 November that sketches out a European Food Agency (EFA) and the principles that should guide European food laws. Details of the plan are scheduled to be announced on 15 November. When implemented, the principles should help the Commission keep an eye on the entire food chain, from the farm to the fork.

At the heart of the proposal -- submitted by Health and Consumer Commissioner David Byrne and Enterprise Commissioner Erkki Liikanen -- is a desire to promote the protection of human life, the protection of the consumers' interests and the traceability of food and feed. The proposal sets out clearly defined responsibilities for food and feed business operators and public authorities, and acknowledges the importance of the precautionary principle.

As the organisation responsible for implementing new food legislation, the EFA will be a separate legal entity from the Community. It will cover all issues having a direct or indirect impact on food safety, as well as animal health and welfare and plant health and nutrition, including genetically modified organisms. In addition to providing up- to-date scientific advice to European policymakers, the EFA will also inform the wider public about food safety issues, including the operation of a rapid alert system for food and feed.

The Commission will retain responsibility for risk management and emergency measures, such as marketing bans or the imposition of specific conditions for marketing. A newly-created Committee on Food Safety and Animal Health will subsequently review any such measures taken. The EFA will serve as a pivot in the rapid alert network, gathering and redistributing information and providing necessary scientific and technical advice to the process.

Once fully operational, the EFA could employ about 300 people, with a budget of some E40m. To date, no decision has been taken as to the location of the EFA, although several European cities, including Helsinki, Barcelona, and Parma, are eager to host the Authority.

"EU Food Agency Plans Revealed", FINANCIAL TIMES, 7 November 2000, ICTSD Internal Files.

IN BRIEF

NAFTA TRIBUNAL RULES AGAINST GOVERNMENT OF CANADA. A NAFTA tribunal has finally ruled on the controversial NAFTA Chapter 11 case involving S.D. Myers Inc, of Ohio and the Government of Canada. Although it has yet to award damages, the tribunal ruled in favour of S.D. Myers Inc. In the case, S.D. Meyers Inc. alleged that a two-year Canadian federal ban on hazardous PCB wastes exports resulted in a loss of business amounting to between \$US30 - 50 million. The ban was lifted by the Canadian government in February 1997, while the US has maintained a similar ban since August 1997. Environmental groups are concerned that the NAFTA tribunal ruling will have detrimental effects on the enforcement of the Basel Convention, an international convention limiting the cross border movement of hazardous wastes to which Canada is party. "NAFTA Ruling Goes Against Ottawa," *THE GLOBE AND MAIL*, 14 November 2000.

APEC MINISTERS FALL SHORT OF AGREEMENT ON NEW ROUND. Foreign and trade ministers from the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum failed to agree on a deadline for launching a new WTO round ahead of the APEC summit on 15-16 November. Proposals by the US, Japan, Australia and Canada to include a target date of 2001 in the declaration of APEC leaders were opposed by a number of developing countries, led by Malaysia, who called on member states to first agree on an agenda before the timetable for negotiations can be set. As a result, the Ministers' communiqué reaffirms their commitment to an early launch of global liberalisation negotiations, but falls short of specifying an actual start to the negotiations in 2001. In their statement, the APEC Ministers also agree to maintain an open region with a multilateral trade system given top priority; welcome progress in negotiations on China's entry into the WTO; and agree that bilateral and regional trade agreements must be consistent with WTO rules. *BRIDGES* will report on the outcome of the APEC summit in a forthcoming issue. "Summary of APEC foreign and trade ministers' statement," *WORLD TRADE NEWS*, 13 November 2000; "APEC Mins Shelve WTO Date Issue, Leave It to Summit," *DOW JONES*, 13 November 2000.

EU LIFTS QUOTAS ON RANGE OF TEXTILE IMPORTS FROM 2002. The EU has announced cuts to import quotas and tariffs on a range of 65 textile products in line with its commitments under the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing. The list of products that will enjoy better access to the EU from January 2002 covers 21.8 percent by value of the EU's 1999 imports worth 12.9 million euros, and includes underwear, parks/anoraks, pyjamas, skirts and baby clothing. Along with the liberalisation, the EU has also called for better access for EU textile exports to overseas markets. Sri Lanka has already begun negotiations on reciprocal arrangements and other countries, including Pakistan, have begun to test the waters. India, which has recently made efforts to further liberalise its ready-made clothing sector by removing restrictions on foreign investments as part of its National Textile Policy, is still considering whether to seek negotiations. "EU opens textile markets further, calls for improved access," *BRIDGENEWS*, 9 November 2000; "India in a bind over textile talks," *THE TIMES OF INDIA*, 13 November 2000; "India opens up clothing sector," *FINANCIAL TIMES*, 4 November 2000.

WTO IN BRIEF

LIBREVILLE 2000 GETS UNDERWAY. Trade ministers from over 50 African countries are meeting in Libreville, Gabon from 13-15 November. The meeting is an opportunity for ministers from some of the world's least developed countries to revisit key aspects of their relationship with

the WTO. Pascal Lamy, the European Trade Commissioner, is also attending the meeting and intends "to underline the EU's firm commitment to integrating developing countries fully into the world trading system." The WTO is currently hosting an on-line discussion entitled "WTO and Africa" parallel to the Libreville meeting. Panellists from within the WTO and experts from outside have been invited to participate in the discussion. To access the Libreville meeting website and register to participate in the WTO and Africa, on-line discussion visit: http://www.itd.org/libreville/libreville_e.htm, or click on the following link to visit the new forum page: http://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/chat_e/chat_e.htm. **BRIDGES** will provide a more detailed report of the conference in next week's issue. "Lamy to Attend African Trade Ministers' Meeting," EC DG-TRADE, 10 November 2000.

CHINESE ACCESSION TAKES A STEP FORWARD. Of the several outstanding issues yet to be negotiated before China is permitted entry into the WTO, two were resolved last week: the administration of tariff rate quotas (TRQs) and judicial review. On the administration of TRQs, the Chinese have agreed that TRQ allocation will be centralised and will fall under federal authority. On judicial review, China has agreed to establish an 'ombudsman-like' single point of contact to which foreign investors may seek recourse should they encounter specious business practices that might jeopardise their investments. The Chinese have also agreed to more transparency in their administrative affairs. Both resolutions lend some momentum to the Chinese accession. However, many trade watchers warn that the China accession will not be agreed to until all outstanding issues have been resolved. Assigning a specific date to the China accession remains purely speculative at this time. In addition, an agreement between China and Mexico -- the last such arrangement with other WTO Members that China needs to sign -- is still pending. "WTO China Talks End On High Note," WTO REPORTER, 13 November 2000; ICTSD Internal Files.

OMAN ACCEDES AS 139th MEMBER. On 9 November, Oman became the 139th Member of the WTO after four years of negotiations. Under the terms of accession, Oman will lower tariffs on imported goods to an average of 15 percent with lower rates for industrial and information technology products. In addition, Oman has made legislative commitments to meet international trade standards and has addressed concerns about mandatory partnerships for import-export deals. The country has also made assurances that after accession, it will eliminate its use of state trading enterprises, specifically in oil exploration and refining. Pakistan's ambassador to the WTO and Chair of the Oman accession process, Munir Akram, called the deal "an important step in regional integration." "Oman becomes World Trade Organization's 139th member," BRIDGENEWS, 9 November 2000.

EVENTS

For a more comprehensive list of events in trade and sustainable development, please refer to ICTSD's web calendar at: <http://www.ictsd.org/html/calendar.htm>.

ICTSD/RIIA/IISD COP 6 Side-Event On Kyoto Protocol And The WTO

20 November, 1800 - 1930h, Congress gebouw, The Hague, Netherlands: COP 6 SIDE EVENT ON "KYOTO AND THE WTO". This event is jointly organised by ICTSD, the Royal Institute for International Affairs (RIIA) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). (Note: the event is reserved for participants to COP-6). For information contact: Heike Baumuller,

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Negotiators from around the world are meeting at UNFCCC/COP-6 from 13-24 November to try to find elusive common ground on the Kyoto Protocol. The Protocol will affect a wider range of economic activities than any environmental treaty yet negotiated. It cannot fail to interact with the international trade regime overseen by the WTO. But the nature of this interaction is obscure. Will the policies and measures adopted by parties affect patterns of international trade? Might they clash with WTO trade rules, and, if so, how would disputes be resolved? Will the flexibility mechanisms -- the clean development mechanism, emissions trading, and joint implementation -- themselves fall under WTO disciplines? Can an effective non-compliance procedure be developed without some element of trade measures? The "Kyoto and the WTO" meeting will explore potential conflicts and the best ways to harmonise trade liberalisation and climate change mitigation.

Coming Up This Week

13-15 November, Libreville, Gabon: MEETING OF AFRICAN TRADE MINISTERS (LIBREVILLE 2000). Hosted by the government of Gabon with the assistance of the WTO. Each country will be represented by at least five participants including the Minister, the WTO Ambassador, two government experts and a representative from the private sector. Organised by the government of Gabon, the meeting is intended to allow ministers from some of the world's least developed countries to revisit key aspects of their relationship with the WTO. For information contact: the office of the Director-General, WTO; tel: (41-22) 739- 5100; Internet: http://www.itd.org/libreville/libreville_e.htm.

13-15 November, Washington, DC: CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE POST-SEATTLE WORLD: REDEFINING THE "LICENCE TO OPERATE" IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY. Sponsored by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). The symposium focuses on how investment, corporate accountability and disclosure can be harnessed to advance sustainability. For information contact: Nauko Kubo, GRI Secretariat, 11 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116 USA; tel: (1-617) 266-9384; email: kubo@globalreporting.org.

13-21 November, Montreal, Canada: NAFTA, THE FTAA AND THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS. Hosted by the International Research Collective (IRC), the conference seeks to share knowledge and analysis about the FTAA leading up to next spring's Summit of the Americas. For information contact: the IRC: tel: (1-514) 937-3200; email: lombrenoire@tao.ca.

13-24 November, The Hague, Netherlands: SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE. For information contact: the UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: (49-228) 815-1000; fax: 815-1999; email: secretariat@unfccc.de; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.de>. From IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca/updates/upcoming.html>.

14 November, Durban, South Africa: ARE TRADE SANCTIONS A PART OF LEGITIMATE INSTRUMENTS FOR ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR? Organised by CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics and Environment. The objective of the panel discussion is to gather the views of the consumer activists around the world on the matter. For information contact: Mr. KS Sajeew, CUTS, D127, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302 016, India; tel: (91-141) 20 7482-4; fax: 20-7486; email: cutsjpr@jp1.dot.net.in; Internet: <http://www.cuts-india.org>.

15 November, 10h00 - 13h00, Rm. C2, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), 7 bis Avenue de la Paix, Geneva, Switzerland: ICTSD/SOUTH CENTRE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON "SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN TRADE POLICY AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES". With Dr. Victor Urquidi, Research-Professor emeritus at El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico DF and former President of the International Association of Economists. This will be a non-attributed meeting amongst developing country delegates and other interested parties on current challenges in trade policy in the context of sustainable development. For information contact: Jeanette Tantillo, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, 13, Ch. Des Anemones, 1219 Switzerland; tel: (41-22) 917-8356; fax: (41-22) 917-8093; email: jtantillo@ictsd.ch; Internet: <http://www.ictsd.org>

15-17 November, Rome, Italy: FAO EXPERT MEETING ON CRITERIA AND INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY MANAGEMENT. For information contact: Christel Palmberg-Lerche, Chief, Forest Resources Development Service, FAO; tel: (39-06) 570-53841; email: christel.palmberg@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/Forestry.htm>.

16 November, Cincinnati, Ohio: CITIZEN SUMMIT ON THE TRANSATLANTIC BUSINESS DIALOGUE. For information contact: Margrete Strand Rangnes, Field Director, Public Citizen Global Trade Watch; 215 Pennsylvania Ave, SE, Washington DC, 20003 USA; tel: (1-202) 454-5106; fax: 547-7392; email: mstrand@citizen.org; Internet: <http://www.tradewatch.org>.

16-17 November 2000, Frankfurt, Germany: GLOBALIZATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR. Organized by UNEP. For information contact: Jacob Malthouse, UNEP Economics & Trade Unit; 15 ch des Anemones, 1219, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: (41-22) 917-8268; email: malthouj@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.unep.ch/etu/>.

16-18 November, Toronto, Ontario: STRENGTHENING CANADA'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL REGIME REFORM: TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHALLENGES. For information contact: Tina Lagopoulos, Centre for International Studies; email: cis.general@utoronto.ca.

17 November, Manchester, England: TRADE, POVERTY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: METHODOLOGIES FOR SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF TRADE POLICY. For information contact: Impact Assessment for Sustainable Development Unit Institute for Development Policy and Management, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9GH, UK; tel: (44-161) 275-2800; fax: 273-8829; email: idpm@man.ac.uk; Internet: <http://www.man.ac.uk/idpm/>.

21 November, Washington, DC: US GOVERNMENT-NGO MEETING ON CARTAGENA PROTOCOL. The US Government will be meeting with NGOs to discuss the agenda and strategy for the upcoming Biosafety Protocol ICCP meeting in Montpellier, France on 11-15 December. For information contact: Amy Johnson; tel: (1-202) 647-1804 or Paul Phifer (1-202) 736-7428.

21-22 November, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: ECA MEETINGS. The Economic Commission for Africa will conduct preliminary meetings in advance of the Financing Development high-level meetings which will take place in 2001. For information contact: Federica Pietracchi, FFD

Secretariat, United Nations; tel: (1-212) 963-1267; email: pietracci@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/analysis/ffd>.

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted at: http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.doc. Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland.

13-15 November, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TEXTILES MONITORING BODY. For information contact: Luis Ople, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

14-16 November, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW BODY-JAPAN. For information contact: Lucie Giraud, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5075.

14-17 November, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE. For information contact: Peter Ungphakorn, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5412.

15 November, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN GOODS. Agenda items include: Requests for extension of the transition period for the TRIMs agreement, review of the TRIMs agreement under Article 9 and Free Trade agreements. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, WTO Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5393.

16 November, Geneva Switzerland: WTO WORKING GROUP ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADE AND INVESTMENT. For information contact: Luis Ople, Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5374.

17 November, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT BODY. Agenda items include: the EC's importation and sale of bananas and Japan's measures affecting agricultural products. Also on the table is a first request from the EC for a panel on a Chilean ban on foreign ships unloading swordfish, and discussion over a recent Appellate Body decision to publish procedures for non-party submissions in the Canada- France asbestos case. For information contact: Nuch Nazeer, Information and Media Relations Division; tel: (41-22) 739-5393.

21 November, Geneva, Switzerland: WTO WORKING GROUP ON THE INTERACTION BETWEEN TRADE AND COMPETITION POLICY. For information contact: Hans-Peter Werner, WTO Information and Media Relations; tel: (41-22) 739-5286.

Other Forthcoming Events

23 November, 11h00 - 13h00, European Commission, Charlemagne Building, 170 Rue de la Loi, 1040 Brussels: GENERAL MEETING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES CHAIRED BY EC TRADE COMMISSIONER LAMY. Proposed Agenda: (1) Sustainable Development and Trade Policy; (2) the EU and the WTO: current situation and outlook for the launch of a New

Round; and (3) DG Trade dialogue with civil society representatives: state of play and next steps. For information contact Laura Parker, DG-1 (Trade), tel: (32-2) 299-4709; Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/2000_round/clmrsc.htm.

28 November, 10am-5pm, Arlington, Virginia, USA: EPA SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY PANEL MEETING ON STARLINK CORN. 1-day meeting of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Scientific Advisory Panel to seek guidance on scientific issues related to StarLink corn. Open to the public. For information contact: the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs' Communication Services Branch, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004; tel: (1-703) 305-5017, Internet: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides>.

11-15 December, Montpellier, France: FIRST MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL. For information contact: Cyrie Sendashonga, CBD Secretariat, World Trade Center, 393 St. Jacques Street, Suite 300, Montreal, Quebec H2Y 1N9, Canada; tel.: (1-514) 288-2220; fax: 288-6588; email: cyrie.sendashonga@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/>. From IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages>.

1 February, Minneapolis, Minnesota: PRESIDENT'S CONFERENCE SERIES GOVERNING GMOs: DEVELOPING POLICY IN THE FACE OF SCIENTIFIC AND PUBLIC DEBATE. Sponsored by the University of Minnesota's Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment and Life Sciences. For information contact: Mark Ritchie, President, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, GMO 01-2700, University of Minnesota, PO Box 64780, St. Paul, MN 55164-0780 USA; tel: (1-888) 671-6214; fax: 671-6215; Internet: <http://www.conferences.umn.edu/mn/policy/>.

5-9 February, Nairobi, Kenya: 21st SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL. For information contact: B. Miller, UNEP; tel: (254-2) 62-3411; fax: 62-3748; email: millerb@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/Calenders>.

14-18 February, Geneva, Switzerland: MEETING OF THE INTERIM CHEMICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE OF THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION. For information, contact: Jim Willis, UNEP Chemicals, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: (41-22)917-8111; fax: 797-3460; email: chemicals@unep.ch. From IISD Linkages, <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages>.

RESOURCES

If you have a relevant resource (books, papers, bulletins, etc.) you would like to see announced in this section, please forward a copy for review by the BRIDGES staff to hcameron@ictsd.ch. Submissions of publications to ICTSD's documentation centre would also be welcome (contact mgalvin@ictsd.ch).

PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE AND PLANT BREEDING: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM WHEAT BREEDING IN THE UK (1965-1995). A discussion paper by Dwijen Rangnekar, 2000. The paper empirically examines strategies of appropriation in wheat breeding. The strategy of planned obsolescence is indicated in the effort to reduce the durability of plant varieties so as to

induce regular replacement purchases by farmers. To obtain a copy contact: Dwijen Rangnekar, Research Fellow, School of Public Policy, University College London, 29/30 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9QU, UK; tel: (44-0-20) 7679-4903; fax: 7679-4969; email: d.rangnekar@ucl.ac.uk; Internet: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/spp/>.

THE ECONOMICS OF NON-GMO SEGREGATION AND IDENTITY PRESERVATION. By David Bullock, 2000. To obtain a copy contact: David Bullock, Associate Professor, Department of Agriculture, University of Illinois; 326 Mumford Hall, 1301 W. Gregory Drive, Urbana, IL 61801; tel: (1-217) 333- 5510; fax: 333-5538; email: dsbulloc@uiuc.edu; Internet: <http://w3.uiuc.edu/ACE/faculty/bullockd.html>.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CORE LABOUR STANDARDS. By OECD, 2000. This study evaluates the developments with respect to trade and labour standards since the OECD's 1996 study on Trade, Employment and Labour Standards and outlines the efforts that have been made to promote these standards and any evidence of progress. The study also provides a current overview of key issues with respect to core labour standards and their relation to trade, foreign direct investment, economic development and employment, aiming to provide a common basis for constructive policy dialogue among the concerned parties in the future. The OECD 1996 and 2000 studies on labour standards are available from the OECD online bookshop (<http://www.oecd.org/ech/pub/listing.htm#Trade & Labour>).

INTEGRATING PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS INTO PATENT LEGISLATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. By Carlos Correa, 2000. The intent of the publication is to assist developing countries in their efforts to adapt their laws to the standards set by TRIPs in relation to pharmaceutical products and processes. In addition the publication seeks to show that various options exist for developing countries in formulating their national legislation in conformity with the relevant provisions of TRIPs. To obtain a copy contact: South Centre, PO Box 228, 1211 Geneva 19; tel: (41-22) 791-8050; fax: 798-8531; Internet: <http://www.southcentre.org>.

ALL ABOUT COMPETITION POLICY & LAW: FOR THE ADVANCED LEARNER. Published by CUTS, 2000. The publication is a briefing kit on competition policy. As globalisation takes place and countries rely more on market forces, the question of ensuring competition and keeping markets functioning efficiently assumes increasing importance. As globalisation increases, potential entrance increases giving rise to increased competition. The publication takes a look specifically at competition policy and economic development, the poor and foreign investment within the globalisation context. For information contact: CUTS, D-217, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302 016, India; email: cutsjpr@jp1.dot.net.in; Internet: <http://www.cuts-india.org>.

Electronic Resources

"Trade Statistics: World Trade Overview" by the WTO. Selected statistics on trade in merchandise and commercial services at world and regional level. They also cover developments of major product categories. To access go to: http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/news_e.htm.

ANATOMY OF A GENE SPILL: DO WE REALLY NEED GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD? Report issued by the Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First), 2000. The report examines the case of genetically engineered StarLink corn-a variety found in Taco Bell taco shells. The report also examines the issues of corporate concentration and collusion in this recent

'gene spill,' the difficulties of keeping GE foods from the human food supply, and the implications of gene spills for human health and the environment. To access go to: <http://www.foodfirst.org/pubs/backgrdrs/2000/f00v6n4.html>.

"Study of Non-Tariff Measures in the Forest Products Sector" by APEC Committee on Trade and Investment, 2000. The objectives of the report are to provide a comprehensive inventory of non-tariff measures and other policies impeding or distorting trade in forest products, an identification of the most frequently used measures and policies, and a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the impact of the measures and policies on trade and of the economic and environmental costs and benefits stemming from the application of policy. To access go to: <http://www.apecsec.org.sg/download/evsl/ForestPdtStudy.pdf>.

"Climate Gateway." Hosted by BCSD-LA/INNOVA CENTER Climate Change Program. The website's goal is to provide to the non-expert audience, the necessary knowledge to understand the problem of climate change; as well as to enhance the importance of the participation of Latin America's private sector, and other members of society in the mitigation of it. To access go to: <http://www.climategateway.com>.

Call For Papers

INDIGINOUS KNOWLEDGE CONFERENCE is seeking papers dealing with preservation of Indigenous knowledge and language, currant development regarding protection of biodiversity among other topics. Abstracts must be submitted by 5 January. For information contact: Priscilla Settee, Conference Co-ordinator, Indigenous Peoples Program, University of Saskatchewan; tel: (1-306) 966-5556; fax: 966-5567; email: Priscilla.Settee@usask.ca.

The North American Agreement on Environemental Cooperation (NAAEC)'s Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) has extended its deadline for written comments on submissions history that will help JPAC improve Articles 14 and 15 of the NAAEC process. The new deadline is 31 January 2001. In March 2001, a report will be drafted and released for public comment in preparation for the second workshop to be held in conjunction with the Council session in June 2001 in Mexico. For information contact: Manon Pepin, JPAC Liaison Officer, 393 St. Jacques West, Suite 200, Montreal, Quebec H2Y 1N9; fax: (1-514) 350-4314; email: mpepin@ccemtl.org.

Courses

WORLD BANK SCHOLARSHIPS. Harvard University is offering full scholarships to citizens of World Bank borrowing member countries including full tuition, a monthly stipend and round-trip airfare . Applicants must have at least 2 years of work experience in the field of economic development policy or administration, 3 for applicants with a bachelor's degree from industrialized countries. For information contact: John F. Kennedy School of Government, 79 John F. Kennedy Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 USA; tel: (1-617) 495-2133; fax: 495-9671; email: jdprograms@ksg.harvard.edu; Internet: <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu>.

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